THOUGHTS

UPON

Infant Baptiſm,

EXTRACTED

FROM A LATE WRITER.

LONDON:
Printed by R. HAWES in *Dorſet-Street, Spitalfields*;
And ſold at the New-Chapel, *City-Road*; and at the
Rev. Mr. *Weſley's* Preaching-Houſes, in Town
and Country, 1780.

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INFANT BAPTISM.

THE Baptiſm of Infants has been a troubleſome Diſpute almoſt ever ſince the Reformation: But I ſhall only rehearſe a few Arguments commonly uſed to vindicate the Practice of Baptizing Children.

I. *The Covenant* made with *Abraham* and *his Seed*, Gen, xvii. is the *Covenant of Grace*; it includes, and was deſigned to extend to *all Believers*. When God promiſed to be a GOD to *Abraham*, and to *his Seed*, St. *Paul* aſſures us, that by *Abraham*'s Seed is meant all that ſhould imitate the Faith of *Abraham*, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, Gal. iii. 7. *Know ye therefore, that they who are of the* Faith, *the ſame are the* Children of *Abraham*. Ver. 29. *If ye are Chriſt's, then are ye* Abraham's *Seed, and Heirs according to the Promiſe.*

The *ſame* ſpiritual Promiſes, and Bleſſings, which belonged to the Church under the *Old Teſtament*, belong alſo to it under the *New*, Acts ii. 39. 2 Cor. i. 20. *Abraham* is repreſented as the *Root*, or *Stock* of the viſible Church, *Rom.* xi. 16. 17. *&c.* The *Jewiſh* Church are the *natural* Branches of it; the *Gentiles* are *ingrafted* into the *ſame Stock*, ver. 17, 24. and partake of the Bleſſings of it.

From theſe Texts (and many others might eaſily be

produced) it ſeems evident, that the *Jewiſh* and the *Chriſtian* Church are but one and the ſame viſible Church in a continued Succeſſion, though under different Adminiſtrations, and Ordinances.

II. The *Covenant* made with *Abraham*, and with *his Seed, is ſtill in Force.* This is implied in what has been already ſaid: But it ought to be particularly conſidered. It is plainly aſſerted by the Apoſtle, *Gal.* iii. 17. To the ſame Purpoſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks in *Rom.* iv. 14. 16. Here he declares, that the Promiſe made to *Abraham*, is not made of *none Effect*, or aboliſhed, but is ſure to all Believers in *all Ages.*

Ever ſince GOD called the Family of *Abraham*, and ſettled his viſible Church in it. He never ſuffered it to fail. It was an *everlaſting Covenant* that he made with *Abraham*, to be his GOD, and the GOD of his Seed, *Gen.* xvii. 7. that he might be the Father both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who were brought into the Church, as in *Rom.* iv. 11, 16.

III. The *Children of the Jews* were viſible Members of the *Jewiſh* Church under the Covenant of *Abraham*, and as ſuch they were acknowledged, and received into it by Circumciſion, as the Door of Entrance, *Gen.* xvii. 9—14.

IV. *The Children of Chriſtians* were *never* cut off from this Privilege, when their fathers were received into the Church, whether they were *Jews* or *Gentiles*; and therefore they are members of the *Chriſtian* Church alſo, under ſpiritual Promiſes, and Bleſſings. When the *Jews* the *natural Branches*, were cut off from the good Olive-Tree, their *little Buds* were cut off with them alſo; and when the *Gentiles* by a Profeſſion of Faith were *grafted* in, as *foreign* Branches, their *little Buds* were grafted in with them. *Chriſt* received *the Children that were brought* by their Parents, and *laid his Hands on them, and bleſſed them, and ſaid, Of ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. x. 13.—16. The Promiſes of the *Old Teſtament*, wherein Children are included, in ſome of the Prophets, do refer to the *Gentile*

Church, as well as the *Jewiſh*, Iſai. xliv. 3. 5. Iſa. lxv. 23. Joel ii. 28, 29. For *it is the Bleſſing of* Abraham which reaches to his Seed, *that comes upon the* Gentiles *through* Jeſus Chriſt, *Gal.* iii. 14. *Rom.* xv. 8. 9. *that the* Gentiles *may glorify* GOD *for his Mercy.*

V. *Baptiſm* is now (like Circumciſion of old) the *Sign* of God's Covenant. This is plainly intimated by the Apoſtle in *Gal.* iii. 27, 29. Circumciſion being aboliſhed, and Baptiſm coming in the Room of it, Baptiſm ſhould be applied to *all* thoſe, who have any Intereſt in the Covenant, as Circumciſion was. Now that Baptiſm is come in the Room of Circumciſion, ſeems plain from *Col.* ii. 12. where the Apoſtle argues, that being baptiſed, we need not be circumciſed: And beſides, Baptiſm and Circumciſion ſignify the ſame Thing, *i. e.* the Removal of Sin; one by Cutting off, and the other by Waſhing away.

VI. As it ſeems to manifeſt the *Right of the Children of Chriſtians* to theſe Bleſſings, or that they have an intereſt in this Covenant, ſo there are ſome Conſiderations, which render it very probable, that Children ſhould be admitted into the viſible Church, by the *Chriſtian* Door of Entrance, that is *Baptiſm*. As for Inſtance:

Firſt, the Goſpel, which is a Diſpenſation of greater Grace, does not *leſſen*, but *increaſe* the *Privileges* of the Church: It takes away Yokes and Burdens indeed, ſuch as Circumciſion was, *Acts* xv. 10. but does not *diminiſh* its Honours or Privileges.

Again, when the Father or Mother of a Family believed in Chriſt, their Houſholds were baptiſed together with themſelves, even where there is no Mention, that the Houſhold believed in *Chriſt* alſo: As in the Caſe of *Lydia* and *Stephanas*, Acts xvi. 15. 1 Cor. i. 16. Now Children are uſually a conſiderable Part of the Houſhold.

Yet further, Children under the *New Teſtament* are as capable of receiving the bleſſing ſignified, and fulfilling the Duties enjoined, as ever they were under the

Old

Old. It is granted that they neither could *then*, nor can *now* underſtand the Bleſſings nor the Duties; yet they might receive the Seal of Circumciſion, or of Baptiſm, as a Bond laid upon them in infancy, to fulfill the Obligations of the Duties of riper Years, and as an Encouragement to wait, and hope for the Bleſſings. This was the Caſe of *Jewiſh* Infants, and why may not *Chriſtians* be favoured with it alſo?

The *Covenant* made with *Abraham*, and with his *Seed*, Gen. xvii. 7. included *Infants*. This Covenant is not repealed or diſannulled (II. Ar.) It was intended to extend to *Chriſtians* and their *Seed* (I.) It is confirmed by God to *Chriſt*, (*Gal.* iii 17.) i. e. It was made with *Chriſt*, conſidered as including all his Members in him. As Circumciſion of old was the Sign of admitting Perſons into this Covenant; ſo now *Baptiſm* is the *Sign* of admitting Perſons into the *ſame* individual Covenant (V.) therefore it muſt be adminiſtered to the *ſame Perſons*, i. e. to *infants*, as well as to the Adult. When the *Covenant* is the *ſame*, the *Privileges* and *Promiſes* the *ſame*, the *Seal* muſt have been the *ſame*, if it had not been changed, and the *Seed* of *Abraham* to inherit muſt be the *ſame* alſo, unleſs there is any Alteration made in the Goſpel. The Seed in covenant included *Infants*; and therefore *Infants* are ſtill *Part* of that Seed of *Abraham*. The Seed of *Abraham* had a *Right* to the *Seal* of the *Covenant*; their *Right* ſtill *continues* as the *Covenant* does; and therefore they are to be admitted, *Infants* in particular, to *Baptiſm*, the preſent *Seal* of this *Covenant*.

If God thought fit to make any Alterations in any Circumſtance of this Covenant, it ſeems neceſſary, that he ſhould give Notice of it in the Goſpel. Accordingly as he thought fit to change the old Sign of *Circumciſion* for Baptiſm, ſo he has in the Goſpel, expreſsly warned us of the Change, *Acts* xv. 24.—xxii. 21, 25. *Gal.* v. 2, 3. And as he choſe to make one Alteration, with regard to the *Perſon* to whom the *Seal* of the ſaid *Covenant* ſhould be applied, and to ordain that *Females*, as well as Males, ſhould be baptized, ſo he has expreſsly told us of this Alteration in the Goſpel, *Acts* viii. 12. xvi. 14. 15. *Gal.* iii. 27, 28, In like manner it muſt

be concluded, that if God would have had a farther Alteration made, if *Infants* of believing Parents, that were formerly to partake of the *Seal* of this *Covenant* were upon the Coming of *Chriſt*, to partake of it *no more*; undoubtedly God would have given us expreſs Warning of it, and have told us in the Goſpel, that though *Infants*, before *Chriſt* came, were in the *Covenant*, *now* they are to be *ſhut out* of it. But as the Goſpel ſays no ſuch thing, it ſeems to me certain, it cannot be true. It is then incumbent upon thoſe who oppoſe Infant-Baptiſm, if they would make their Point good, poſitively to prove this by Texts, which expreſsly declare, that *Chriſt* has *caſt Infants* out of the *Covenant*, though before they were in it. But no ſuch Texts can be produced: therefore it appears, *they continue in Covenant*, and have ſtill a *Right* to the *Seal* of it, which is *Baptiſm*.

It will be in vain here to urge, that the Scripture ſufficiently declares againſt Applying this Seal of the *Covenant* to Infants, by making *Faith* and *Repentance* the *Conditions* of *Baptiſm*. For this Kind of Arguing would as well prove that *Infants* heretofore were not qualified for *Circumciſion*, which yet no Man will aſſert. As this Argument would prove too much, it muſt be looked upon as proving Nothing. It will be needful to add as a diſtinct Head, that

VII. The Texts which ſpeak of Faith as the Term of Baptiſm do not at all imply, that *Infants* are not to be baptized. In the Caſe juſt now mentioned, there is a Parallel between *Baptiſm* and *Circumciſion*. If a Heathen heretofore was proſelyted to the *Jewiſh* Religion, and did hereupon deſire to be circumciſed, he was admitted to *Circumciſion* upon the Account of his Faith in the GOD of *Iſrael*: And till he profeſſed this Faith, he could not *lawfully* be circumciſed. And if a *Jewiſh Prophet* had been inviting a Set of Heathens to *Judaiſm* and *Circumciſion*, he would have been forced to talk in ſuch a Manner as this, *viz.* "Believe "in the one true GOD and ye ſhall be circumciſed. "He that believeth and is circumciſed, ſhall be ſaved: "but he that believeth not ſhall be condemned. Re-

"pent

" pent of your Idolatry, and other ſins, and be cir-
" cumciſed. Circumciſion now ſaveth us, not the Put-
" ting away a Bit of Fleſh, but the Anſwer of a good
" Conſcience towards the true GOD. Ariſe then and
" be circumciſed, and put away your Sins." In this Manner the *Jewiſh Prophet* muſt have ſpoke to his *Heathen Audience*. And if he had *ſucceeded*, and made Proſelytes, the Hiſtory of it muſt have been expreſſed in ſuch Language as this, *viz.* " When the Heathens
" believed the Prophet preaching the Things concerning
" the Kingdom of GOD, they were circumciſed. A
" certain *Convert* ſaid to the *Jewiſh* Prophet, What
" ſhould hinder my being circumciſed? The Prophet
" anſwered, If you believe with all your Heart, you
" may. He replied, I believe that there is one GOD,
" and that *Moſes* is his Prophet. And hereupon he
" circumciſed him. Others hearing, believed, and
" were circumciſed." This, I apprehend, muſt have been the Language, in caſe the Prophet had preached to a Heathen Nation, and proſelyted them. And yet, I ſuppoſe, that no one would, from this Kind of Language, infer, that *Infants* were not to be circumciſed, or that *actual* Faith in GOD was ſo univerſally neceſſary to *Circumciſion*, as that Infants were not to receive it, for want of actual Faith. As this will be allowed by every one, it muſt be acknowledged alſo, by Parity of Reaſon, that *the very ſame Expreſſions*, when in the *ſame* Circumſtances applied to Baptiſm, cannot imply that Infants are not to be *baptized*. All I now contend for is, that they do not even *ſeem to imply*, that Infants are not to be *baptized*; for this they cannot do, unleſs in the Caſe above repreſented, they did alſo imply, that Infants were not heretofore to be *circumciſed*. As it will be allowed, they would not have implied this, they cannot conſiſtently be thought to imply the other.

If it had been fit to have continued *Circumciſion*, as the Sign of God's *Covenant*, and *Chriſt* had actually continued it, when he gave his Apoſtles a Commiſſion to proſelyte the *Gentile* Nations, I do not ſee how he could have expreſſed his Thoughts better than this; *Go, proſelyte all Nations, circumciſing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghoſt*, i. e.

Prove

Prove to the *Gentiles*, that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, and when they profeſs to believe this, *circumciſe* them. Would the Apoſtle, or any one elſe, have inferred from hence that Infants, not having actual Faith, were not to be circumciſed? Nay, rather on the other hand, the Apoſtle would have reaſoned thus: "The Sign of "GOD's *Covenant*, *Circumciſion*, has hitherto been "*confined* to one Nation even that of the *Iſraelites*: "but now *Chriſt* has commanded us to extend it to *all* "*the Nations* of the Earth. He has ordered us to *go*, "*proſelyte all Nations*, and circumciſe them. Surely "it is his Intention, that we ſhould take our *Pattern* "from the Practice of *Circumciſion* among the *Jews*. "He cannot therefore be ſuppoſed to mean, that we "muſt only circumciſe grown Men, who are capable "of believing the Goſpel, and profeſs ſo to do. It is "evident he intends, that when we ſhould have circum-"ciſed ſuch, we ſhould next circumciſe *their Male* "*Children*; and that in *after Generations*, the Males a-"mong them ſhould be circumciſed the eighth Day. "Thus it was at the firſt Inſtitution. *Abraham* was "firſt circumciſed, then his Children, of whatſoever "Ages they happened to be; and in *after Generations* "their Children were circumciſed the eighth Day. "This is a Direction to us. And when we are bid to "*go proſelyte all Nations*, *circumciſing them*, we plainly "ſee, we are not forbidden to circumciſe Infants; but, "on the contrary, are ordered to imitate this Example "of our Father *Abraham*." I obſerved, if *Circumciſion* had been *retained*, as the Seal of the *Covenant*, and the ſame *Commiſſion* had been given to the Apoſtles, as now was given them, only the Word *circumciſe* uſed inſtead of *baptize*, no one would have imagined, that Form of Expreſſion would in the leaſt have interfered with the *Circumciſion* of Infants. It is as certain then that the *ſame* Form of Words, applied to *Baptiſm*, cannot in the leaſt interfere with the *Baptiſm of Infants*.

Theſe Conſiderations, I think, *fully* take off the *Force* of *all the Objections* that Men think they find in the Scripture againſt the Baptiſm of *Infants*. If there be any thing in the *Nature* of Baptiſm, as a *Seal* of the *Covenant*, which *confines* it to ſuch as *believe*, there muſt

must have been the *ſame* limiting Nature in *Circumciſion*, which was a *Seal* of the *ſame Covenant*. But as *this* is certainly falſe, the other cannot be true. If an Infant was not by reaſon of his Age, *unqualified* to receive the Sign of *Circumciſion*, *a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith*, an Infant cannot now by reaſon of his Age, be conſiſtently thought unqualified for *Baptiſm*, which is a Seal of the *ſame*.

Farther to confirm this Point, if it needs *Confirmation*, it may be obſerved, that *the ſame Forms* of Expreſſion, which are urged out of the *New Teſtament*, to prove that Infants are not qualified for *Baptiſm*, for Want of actual Faith and Repentance, would *equally* prove them unqualified for *Salvation*. From *Chriſt's* ſaying, *He that believes, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved*, ſome have inferred, that a Perſon muſt actually believe, or elſe he cannot be baptized. With as much Strength of Reaſon they might infer, that a Perſon cannot be ſaved, unleſs he actually believe; eſpecially ſince it is added, *He that believeth ſhall not be damned*. Yet it is acknowledged, that though Infants do not believe, yet they ſhall not be damned. It is evident then to all, that this Text muſt be interpreted as ſpeaking *only of the Adult*, who were capable of hearing and believing the Goſpel. Since then it does not at all ſpeak of Infants, they may be ſaved, and may be baptiſed too, notwithſtanding they are not Believers. The Method of proving that they may be *ſaved without Faith*, will as neceſſarily demonſtrate, that they may be *baptized without their own Faith*, notwithſtanding any thing that is laid down in this Text. Thus all the Objections againſt Infant-Baptiſm are at once cut off.

VIII. *In the Chriſtian Church from its earlieſt Ages, and we think from the Apoſtles Time, it has been the Cuſtom to baptize the Infant Children of profeſſed Chriſtians.*

To prove this, I ſhall produce a few Witneſſes, among many. 1. *Juſtin Martyr*, who wrote about forty Years after the Apoſtles, in his Dialogue with *Trypho* the *Jew*, page 59, plainly ſpeaks of Baptiſm, as being to *Chriſtians* in the Stead of *Circumciſion*. And in his

Apo-

Apology for the Chriſtians, near the Beginning, he ſays, "*Several Perſons among us of ſixty or ſeventy Years* "*old, of both Sexes, were diſciples* [or made Diſciples] *to* "*Chriſt in or from their Childhood.*" Pleaſe to obſerve, that *Juſtin's* Word ἐμαθητεύθησαν, *were diſcipled*, or *made Diſciples*, is the very ſame Word that had been uſed by St. *Matthew*, xxviii. 19. in expreſſing our Saviour's Command, μαθητεύσατε, *diſciple all Nations.* And it was done to theſe Perſons, *Juſtin* ſays, in, or from their Childhood. And he wrote that *Apology* within forty Years of the Death of the Apoſtles: And ſeventy Years reckoned back from that Time, do reach into the midſt of the Apoſtles Time.

2. *Irenæus*, born about the Time of St. JOHN's Death, in his Treatiſe, *Adv. Hæreſ. lib. 2. chap* 3. ſpeaking of *Chriſt*, ſays, "Not diſdaining nor going "in a way above human Nature, nor breaking in his "own Perſon the Law which he had ſet for Mankind: "But ſanctifying every ſeveral Age by the Likeneſs it "has to Him. For he came to ſave all Perſons by "Himſelf: *All*, I mean, who by Him are *regenerated* "unto God; *Infants*, and little Ones, and Children, "and Youths, and elderly Perſons. Therefore He "went through the ſeveral Ages: For Infants being "made an Infant, ſanctifying Infants, *&c.*"

This Teſtimony which reckons *Infants* among thoſe that are *regenerated*, is plain and full. Dr. *Wall* has largely ſhewn that the Word *Regenerating* does, particularly in the Writings of *Irenæus*, and in the uſual Phraſe of thoſe Times, ſignify *Baptizing*: He mentions ſome Places, which expreſsly declare, that *Chriſt* was *regenerated* by *John*; meaning that he was *baptized* by him.

Near the Time that *Irenæus* wrote the above Treatiſe, *Clemens Alexandrinus* wrote his *Pædagog*, wherein he expreſsly ſays, "The Word *Regeneration* is the "Name of *Baptiſm.*" (l. 1. c. 6. near the Beginning): His thus plainly declaring, that *Regenerating* is the common Name for *Baptizing*, does very much confirm the Argument taken from *Irenæus*, who aſſerts, that *Infants* were *regenerated* unto God.

Pleaſe

Pleaſe to take Notice, how near this Man was to the Apoſtles Time. *Irenæus* himſelf ſays, l. 5. c. 30. that the Revelation made to St. *John* in *Patmos*, was but a little before his Time, and that Revolution was five or ſix Years before St. *John's* Death. In an Age ſo nigh the Apoſtles, and in a Place where one of them had ſo lately lived, the *Chriſtians* could not be ignorant what had been done in their Time, in a Matter ſo publick as the Baptizing or not Baptizing of Infants.

3. *Origen* is not only expreſs for the Baptizing of Infants, but gives his Reaſons for it: In his eighth Homily, or Sermon, on *Leviticus*, C. 12. he thus ſays, "Hear *David* ſpeaking; *I was*, ſays he, *ſhapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me*: Shewing, that every Soul that is born in the Fleſh is polluted with the Filth of Sin, and Iniquity: And that therefore that was ſaid, which he mentioned before; that *none is free from Pollution, tho' his life be but the Length of one Day.*"

"Beſides all this, let it be conſidered, what is the Reaſon, that whereas the Baptiſm of the Church is given for the Forgiveneſs of Sins, *Infants are alſo by the Uſage of the Church baptized*; when, if there was nothing in Infants that wanted Forgiveneſs and Mercy, the Grace of Baptiſm would be needleſs to them."

Again, in his Homily on *Luke* xiv. he ſays as follows: "Infants are baptized for the Forgiveneſs of Sins. Of what Sins? Or when have they ſinned? Or how can any Reaſon of the Laver in their Caſe hold good, but according to that Senſe that we mentioned even now: *None is free from Pollution, though his Life be but the Length of One Day upon Earth?* And it is for that Reaſon, becauſe by the Sacrament of Baptiſm the Pollution of our Birth is taken away, that Infants are baptized."

Yet farther, in the fifth Book of his Commentary on the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, he ſays thus, "And alſo in the Law it is commanded, that a Sacrifice be offered for every Child that is born; *a Pair of Turtle Doves, or two young Pigeons; of which one is for a Sin-Offer-*

" *Offering the other for a Burnt-Offering.* For what " Sin is this one Pigeon offered? Can the Child that " is new born have committed any Sin? It has even " *then* Sin, for which the Sacrifice is commanded to be " offered; from which even he, *whoſe Life is but of one* " *Day*, is denied to be free.

" For this alſo it was, that the Church had FROM " THE APOSTLES AN ORDER *to give Baptiſm to Infants.* " For they to whom the divine Myſteries were com- " mitted, knew that there is in all Perſons the natural " Pollution of Sin, which muſt be done away by Wa- " ter and the Spirit."

The Reader is deſired to obſerve, that *Origen*, not only ſays, that it was the *Cuſtom of the Church* to baptize *Infants*, but he expreſly affirms, " *That the Church* " *received an* Order *from the* APOSTLES *to give Bap-* " *tiſm even to Infants.*"

There is one Circumſtance that makes *Origen* a more competent Witneſs to give Evidence, whether the Baptizing of Infants had been in uſe, Time out of Mind, or not, than moſt other Authors that we have left to us of that Age; becauſe he was himſelf of a Family that had been *Chriſtians* for a long Time. The other Witneſſes that I have mentioned, except *Irenæus*, muſt have been themſelves baptized in adult Age; becauſe they were of *heathen* Parents. But *Origen*'s Father was a Martyr for *Chriſt* in the Perſecution under *Severus*, the Year after the Apoſtles, 102. And *Euſebius* (in his Hiſtory, Book 6. Chap. 19) aſſures us, that his Forefathers had been *Chriſtians* for ſeveral Generations.

Now ſince *Origen* was born in the eighty-fifth Year after the Apoſtles (for he was ſeventeen Years old when his Father ſuffered Martyrdom) his Grandfather, or at leaſt his Great-Grandfather, muſt have lived in the Apoſtles Time. And as he could not be ignorant whether he himſelf was baptized in Infancy, ſo he had no farther than his own Family to go, to enquire what was practiſed in the Time of the Apoſtles.

Beſides that, he was a very learned Man, and could not be ignorant of the Uſe of the Churches; in moſt of which he had alſo travelled; for as he was born and bred at *Alexandria*, ſo it appears out of *Euſebius's* Hiſtory,

ſtory, B. 6. that he had lived in *Greece*, and at *Rome* and in *Cappadocia*, and *Arabia*, and ſpent the main Part of his life in *Syria*, and *Paleſtine*.

5. What I apprehend very much ſtrengthens the Truth of Infant-Baptiſm, that it is of a Divine Original, is this, " About one hundred and fifty Years after the " Death of St. *John* the Apoſtle, there was an Aſſembly " of ſixty-ſix Biſhops, who ſpoke of Infant-Baptiſm, " as a known, eſtabliſhed, and unconteſted Practice." One *Fidus* queſtioned, whether Infants were to be baptized ſo ſoon as within two or three Days after their Birth, and whether it would not be better to defer their Baptiſm, till they were eight Days old, as was obſerved in *Circumciſion*; which Scruples he propoſed to this Aſſembly, and in which he deſired their Reſolution, which they ſent in a Letter to him; Part of which I ſhall tranſcribe.

" *Cyprian*, and the reſt of the Biſhops, who were pre-
" ſent at the Council, ſixty-ſix in Number, to
" *Fidus* our Brother, greeting.

" We read your Letter, moſt dear Brother, -----
" But as to the Caſe of Infants: Whereas you judge,
" *that they muſt not be baptized within two or three*
" *Days after they are born; and that the Rule of Cir-*
" *cumciſion is to be obſerved, ſo that none ſhould be bap-*
" *tized, and ſanctified before the eighth Day after he is*
" *born:* We were all in our Aſſembly of the contrary
" Opinion.

" We judge that no Perſon is to be hindered from
" obtaining the Grace, by the Law, that is now ap-
" pointed; and that the ſpiritual *Circumciſion* ought
" not to be reſtrained by the *Circumciſion* that was ac-
" cording to the Fleſh: But that all are to be admitted
" to the Grace of *Chriſt*; ſince *Peter* ſpeaking in the
" *Acts* of the Apoſtles, ſays, *The Lord has ſhewn me,*
" *that no Perſon is to be called common, or unclean.*.....

" This therefore, dear Brother, was our Opinion in
" the Aſſembly; that it is not for us to hinder any
" Perſon from Baptiſm, and the Grace of God, who is
" merciful, and benign, and affectionate to all. Which

" Rule, as it holds for all, ſo we think it more eſpecially " to be obſerved in Reference to Infants newly born : " To whom our Help and the Divine Mercy is rather " to be granted; becauſe, by their Cries and Tears at " their firſt Entrance into the World, they do intimate " nothing ſo much, as that they implore Compaſſion."

From this Piece of Hiſtory it appears, that both the Perſons who moved the Doubt, and all the Perſons who reſolved it, *unanimouſly* agreed in this, that *Infants were to be baptized*, and that it was the ſettled Cuſtom of the Church to baptize them. If the Aſſembly had been againſt Infant-Baptiſm, they would have anſwer'd ; *It is ſo far from being neceſſary to baptize Children on the eighth Day after their Birth, that they ought not to be baptized at all, till they are of Age to judge and act for themſelves.* But none of thoſe Biſhops was in this Sentiment. They all look'd upon it, as a Thing unconteſted, that Infants were to be baptized.

If we look back from this Time to the Space that had paſſed from the Apoſtles Time, which was but 150 Years, we muſt conclude, that it was eaſy then to know the Practice of *Chriſtians* in the Apoſtles Days. For ſome of theſe 66 Biſhops may be thought to be at this Time ſixty or ſeventy Years old themſelves, which reaches almoſt to Half the Space: And at that time when they were Infants, there muſt have been ſeveral alive, that were born within the Apoſtles Age. And ſuch could not be ignorant, whether Infants were baptized in that Age, when they themſelves were ſome of thoſe Infants. And as there was no Diſpute, or Difference of Opinion (as there muſt have been among ſo many, if any Innovation had been made: For it is here expreſly ſaid, *there was not one of* Fidus's *Mind*,) that Infant Baptiſm muſt be delayed till the eighth Day; much leſs then was there any of Opinion, that it was not to be at all.

" In a doctrinal Point, *as Mr.* Baxter *well obſerves*, " a Miſtake is eaſier, than in a bare Narration of ſome " one Fact : But in a Matter of Fact of ſo publick No- " tice, and which ſo many Thouſands were Partakers " in, as Baptiſm was, how could they be ignorant ?"

Suppoſe it were a Queſtion now among us, Whether Perſons

Perſons were baptized at Age only, or in Infancy alſo, eighty Years before we were born: Were it not eaſy to know the Truth, what by Report, and what by Records?

I ſhall conclude what I have to remark on this Teſtimony with obſerving, That we ſee here confirmed, what was ſaid before, that Baptiſm was reckoned to be to *Chriſtians* in the room of Circumciſion. For it was upon that Account, that *Fidus* thought it muſt be the Time of the old Circumciſion; and the Biſhops of the Council, though denying that, do call it the *Spiritual* [or Chriſtian] *Circumciſion*.

6. *Ambroſe* commenting on thoſe Words, *Luke* i. 17. where the Angel prophefies of *John* the Baptiſt, *He ſhall go before him in the Spirit* and *Power of* Elias; after having ſhewn in ſeveral Particulars, how *John*, in his Office, did reſemble *Elias*, and having mentioned that Miracle of *Elias* dividing the River *Jordan*, adds thus; "But perhaps this may ſeem to be fulfilled in our "Time, and in the Apoſtles Time. For that Return-"ing of the River Waters backward toward the Spring-"head, which was cauſed by *Elias*, when the River "was divided (as the Scripture ſays, *Jordan was driven* "*back*) ſignified the Sacrament of the Laver of Sal-"vation, which was afterwards to be inſtituted; by "which thoſe *Infants that are baptized*, are reformed "back again from Wickedneſs [or a corrupt State] to "the primitive State of their Nature."

He means they are freed from the Guilt of Original Sin, and in ſome Senſe reduced back to the primitive State, in which Man was, before that happened. He plainly ſpeaks of *Infants, as baptized in the Apoſtles Time*, as well as in his own; and makes St. *John*, in baptizing Infants for the Reformation of their Nature to the primitive Purity of it, to reſemble *Elias* in turning back the Waters to their Spring-head.

Auſtin, in his Treatiſe *De Baptiſmo contra Donatiſtas*, Lib. 4. *C.* 23. having had Occaſion to ſpeak of the Penitent Thief, who obtained Salvation without Baptiſm, ſhews, that that is no more an Argument againſt the Neceſſity of Baptiſm, where it may be had, than the

Example of *baptized Infants* obtaining Salvation without *Faith*, is an Argument againſt the Neceſſity of Faith, where the Subject is capable of it. Near the Concluſion of the fourth Book, he ſays, "And as the Thief who "by Neceſſity went without Baptiſm, was ſaved, be- "cauſe, by his Piety, he had it ſpiritually. So where "Baptiſm is had, tho' the Party by Neceſſity go with- "out that [Faith] which the Thief had, yet he is ſaved.

"Which the *Whole Body of the Church* holds, as de- "livered to them, in the Caſe of little Infants bap- "tized: Who certainly cannot yet believe with the "Heart to Righteouſneſs, or confeſs with the Mouth "to Salvation, as the Thief could; nay, by their Cry- "ing and Noiſe, while the Sacrament is adminiſtring, "they diſturb the holy Myſteries: And yet *no Chriſtian* "*Man of any Sort* will ſay, they are baptized to no "Purpoſe.

"And if any one do aſk for Divine Authority in this "Matter, though that which the whole Church prac- "tiſes, and which has not been inſtituted by Councils, "but was ever in uſe, is very reaſonably believed to be "no other than a thing *ordered by the Authority of the* "*Apoſtles*: Yet we may beſides take a true Eſtimate, "how much the Sacrament of Baptiſm does avail In- "fants, by the *Circumciſion* which God's former People "received." In what follows, he moſt plainly declares, that Baptiſm is to the *Chriſtian* Infants, as Circumciſion was to the *Jewiſh*.

Though *Auſtin* ſpeaks of Infant Baptiſm in this Place but occaſionally, his Words are a full Evidence, that it was then univerſally practiſed, and had been ſo beyond the Memory of any Man, or of any Record: That they took it to be a Thing that had not been *enacted by any Council*, but had *been in uſe from the Beginning of Chriſtianity*. And they had then but 300 Years to look back to the Times of the Apoſtles, whereas we now have upwards of 1600. And many Writings, and Records, which are now loſt, were then extant, and eaſily known.

It deſerves a particular Remark, that moſt of theſe Witneſſes for infant-Baptiſm, were not only faithful to the LORD Jeſus Chriſt, but were faithful unto Death,

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joyfully ſuffering Martyrdom for the Truth: Surely, this is a great Acceſſion to the Strength of their Teſtimony.

All theſe things put together, ſeem to prove, that Infant Baptiſm was practiſed in the Church of *Chriſt* from the *Beginning*, and conſequently that it is of an *Apoſtolical* and *Divine* Original.

As *for the firſt four hundred Years*, there appears only one Man, *Tertullian*, that adviſed the Delay of Infant-Baptiſm *in ſome Caſes*, and one *Gregory*, that did perhaps practiſe ſuch Delay in the Caſe of his Children; but no Society of Men ſo thinking, or ſo practiſing: So in the next ſeven hundred Years, there is not ſo much as *one Man* to be found, that either ſpoke for, or practiſed ſuch Delay. But all the contrary. And when one Sect among the *Waldenſes* declared againſt the Baptizing of Infants, as being uncapable of Salvation, the main Body of that People rejected their Opinion: And thoſe of them that held that Opinion, quickly dwindled away, and diſappeared; there being no more heard of holding that Tenet, till the Riſing of the *German* Anti-pædobaptiſts, in the Year 1522. "And all the na-"tional Churches *now* in the World do profeſs and "practiſe Infant-Baptiſm."

This brings to my Remembrance a very clear Proof for the Baptiſm of Infants, which much ſatisfied the Mind of the Great and Good Mr. *Baxter*; I ſhall relate it in his own Words. "I am fully ſatisfied, that Mr. "*Tombs* cannot ſhew me any Society (I think not one "Man) that ever opened their Mouths againſt Baptiſm "of Infants, till about 200 Years ago, or thereabout. "Which confirms me much, that it is from the Apoſ-"tles Times, or elſe ſome one would have been found "as an Oppoſer of it; even as I profeſs ſeriouſly, that "it much ſatisfieth my Conſcience, that *Chriſt* and his "Apoſtles did never ſhut the Infants of believing *Jews* "(and conſequently not of believing *Gentiles*) from be-"ing Members of his viſible Church, in that I never "find in all the New Teſtament one Word of Excep-"tion, Arguing, Murmuring, or Diſſatisfaction againſt "it; when as it cannot poſſibly be conceived, but thoſe "*Jews* who kept ſuch a Stir before they would let go

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" *Circumciſion*, the Sign of Church-Membership, when " yet they had Baptiſm, another Sign, would undoubtedly " have been much more ſcandaliz'd at the Unchurching " of all their Children, and would have, much hardlier " have let go that Privilege of their Church-Member- " ſhip, or at leaſt have raiſed ſome Scruple about it, " which might have occaſioned one Word of Satisfac- " tion from ſome one of the Apoſtles; eſpecially when " *Paul* calls them Holy, and *Chriſt* ſaith, *Suffer them to* " *come to me, and forbid them not, for of ſuch is the King-* " *dom of God.* I know not how Mr. *T*———, and " ſuch others think on theſe Things; but, for my Part, " they ſtick ſo cloſe to my Conſcience, that I dare not " ſay, *Chriſt* would have no Infants received into his " viſible Church among the Number of *Chriſtians*, " when I find he once placed them in the Church; and " neither Mr. *T*———, nor any Man breathing, can " ſhew me one Word of Scripture where ever *Chriſt* " did put them out again; and yet theſe Men pretend " to ſtand to the Determination of Scripture. I would " this one Thing were impartially conſidered."

With regard to the Mode of Baptizing, I would only add, *Chriſt* no where, as far as I can find, requires *Dipping*, but only *Baptizing*; which Word, many moſt eminent for Learning and Piety, have declared, ſignifies to *pour on*, or *ſprinkle*, as well as to *dip*. As our LORD has graciouſly given us a Word of ſuch extenſive Meaning, doubtleſs the Parent, or the Perſon to be baptized, if he be Adult, ought to chooſe which Way he beſt approves. What GOD has left *indifferent* it becomes not *Man* to make neceſſary.

I think it proper in this Place to ſubjoin what Dr. *Watts* has declared concerning the Signification of this Word. " The *Greek* Word *Baptizo*, (ſays he) ſignifies *to waſh* any Thing properly *by Water coming over it:* Now there are ſeveral Ways of ſuch Waſhing. (*viz.*) *Sprinkling* Water on it in a ſmall Quantity, *Pouring* Water on it in a larger Quantity, or *Dipping* it under Water, either in part or in whole: And ſince this ſeems to be left undetermined in Scripture to one particular Mode; therefore any of theſe Ways of Waſhing may be ſufficient to anſwer the Purpoſe of this Ordinance.

Now

Now that the *Greek* Word ſignifies *Waſhing* a Thing in general by Water coming over it, and not always *Dipping*, is argued by learned Men, not only from ancient *Greek* Authors, but from the *New Teſtament* itſelf, as *Luke* xi. 38. *The Phariſees marvelled that* Jeſus *had not firſt waſhed before Dinner.* In *Greek*, that he was not firſt *Baptized*; and can it be ſuppoſed, that they would have him *dip* himſelf in Water? *Mark* vii. 4. *The Phariſees, when they come from the Market, eat not except they are waſhed.* In *Greek*, except they are *Baptized*; ſurely it cannot mean *except they were dipped.* And if this ſhould be reſtrained to ſignify *waſhing their Hands only*, yet it does not ſignify neceſſarily *dipping* them; for the Manner of waſhing their Hands of old, was by *pouring Water* on them, as *Eliſha poured Water on the Hands of Elijah*, 2 Kings iii. 11. Yet further they practiſed *the Waſhing of Tables* (in *Greek*, *Baptiſm of Beds*) as well as *Cups and Veſſels.* Now *Beds* could not uſually be waſhed by *dipping*, Heb. ix. 10. The *Jews* had divers Waſhings preſcribed by *Moſes*, (in *Greek*, *Baptiſms*) which were *Sprinkling* and *Pouring Water* on Things, as well as Plunging them all over in Water. *The Children of Iſrael were baptized unto Moſes in the Cloud and the Sea, in their Paſſage thro' the Red-Sea, at their March from Egypt*, 1 Cor. xii. 2. Not that they were *dipped* in the Water, but that they were *ſprinkled* by the Clouds over their Heads, and perhaps by the Water which ſtood up in Heaps as they paſſed by.

Beſides, Pouring or Sprinkling more naturally repreſents moſt of the ſpiritual Bleſſings ſignified by Baptiſm, (*viz.*) the Sprinkling the Blood of *Chriſt* on the Conſcience, or the Pouring out of the Spirit on the Perſon baptized, or Sprinkling him with clean Water, as an Emblem of the Influence of the Spirit; all which are the Things ſignified in Baptiſm, as different Repreſentations of the Cleanſing away of the Guilt or Defilement of Sin thereby.

I conclude, ſince this Controverſy has Difficulties attending it, Perſons of an honeſt and ſincere Soul, in ſearching out the Truth, may happen to run into different Opinions: But the Things wherein we agree, are ſo important, as ſhould not ſuffer us to quarrel about the

the leſſer Things wherein we differ. Our Brethren, who reject Infant-Baptiſm, as well as we who practiſe it, all agree in a Belief of the ſacred Inſtitution of this Ordinance: We all agree, that Children ſhould be devoted to GOD, and ſhould be Partakers of all the Privileges which Scripture admits, and that they ſhould grow up under all poſſible Obligations to Duty; and ſince each of us deſires to find out the Will of *Chriſt*, and practiſe it accordingly, it is a moſt unreaſonable Thing, that we ſhould be angry with each other, becauſe ſome of us are devoted to God and Chriſt, by this Ceremony, a little *ſooner* or a little *later* than others; or becauſe ſome devote their Children to GOD in Baptiſm, as a Claim of Privileges, and an Obligation to Duties, before they can do this for themſelves, and are capable of acting therein: Or becauſe ſome of us think, this Ordinance requires much Water, and that the whole Body be immerſed in it; others ſuppoſe, a little is ſufficient, and that he who hath the Face or Head waſhed in this Solemnity, has as true a Significancy of Goſpel Benefits and Obligations, as he, who has his whole Body put under Water, ſince our Saviour thought ſo when he waſhed *Peter*'s Feet, *John* xiii. 10. In ſhort, where Faith in *Chriſt*, and Love to GOD, and Obedience to the ſanctifying Operations of the Spirit, are made neceſſary to Salvation, and agreed upon by us all, it is Pity that theſe leſſer Things ſhould raiſe ſuch unhappy Contentions among the Diſciples of the bleſſed JESUS, the Prince of Peace.

FINIS.